



United States Mint Unveils Design for First U.S. Coin with Readable Braille

July 2, 2008

WASHINGTON — United States Mint Director Ed Moy unveiled the design for the 2009 Louis Braille Bicentennial Silver Dollar at the National Federation of the Blind’s annual convention in Dallas, Texas, during the March for Independence on July 2, 2008.

“The United States Mint is proud to present the 2009 Louis Braille Bicentennial Silver Dollar coin design. It will be the first coin ever minted in the history of our country to contain readable Braille characters,” said Director Moy. “I am looking forward to presenting the design for this unprecedented coin, and I am pleased that the United States Mint is playing a role in the cause of bringing literacy to all blind and visually impaired Americans.”

A prototype was displayed at the convention for the attendees to examine and experience the Braille on the coin prior to being available for purchase. (Click [here](#) for a high resolution image of the prototype reverse.)

The coin will go on sale in the spring of 2009, the bicentennial anniversary of Louis Braille’s birth. (Click [here](#) for high resolution images of the obverse and reverse.)

In addition to commemorating the life and work of Louis Braille—the inventor of the Braille reading and writing system—surcharges from the sale of the coin are authorized to be paid to the National Federation of the Blind to help fund Braille literacy initiatives. Braille did not become the official method of reading and writing for the blind in the United States until the 20th century.

Previously, the Alabama commemorative quarter-dollar, one of the coins in the United States Mint’s popular 50 State Quarters Program, used Braille in the image honoring Helen Keller. The 1995 and 1996 Paralympic Silver Dollars, minted to commemorate the 1996 Atlanta Olympics, also featured Braille. The Braille on those coins was too small to be read by the visually impaired.

Besides the readable Braille on the 2009 Louis Braille Bicentennial Silver Dollar, the coin has distinguishing features apparent to the visually impaired community, such as size, weight and reeded edges, as do all coins issued by the United States Mint.

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